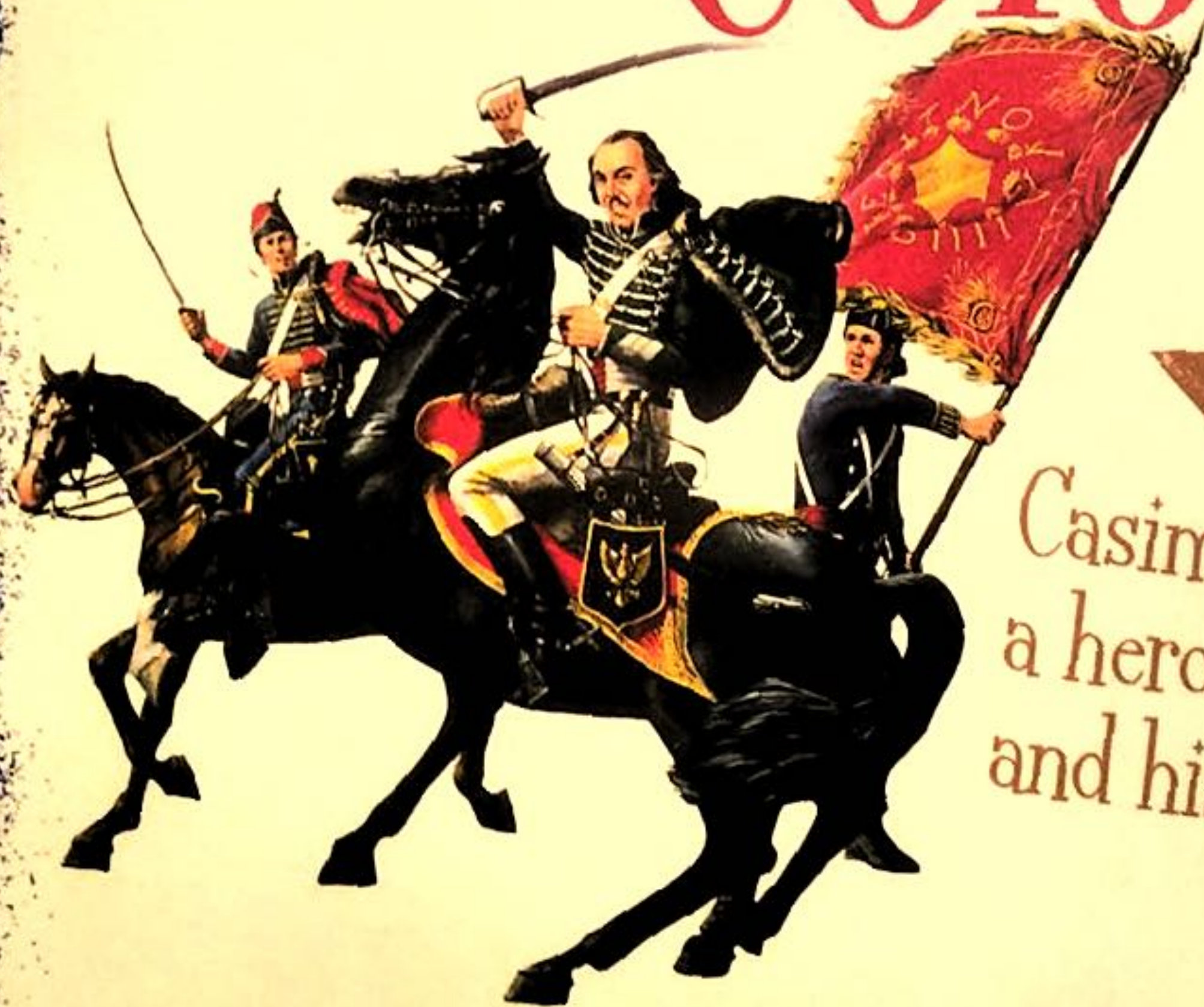


A **TRUE** BOOK

# The Georgia Colony



Casimir Pulaski was  
a hero in both America  
and his native Poland.

KEVIN CUNNINGHAM



# Timeline of Georgia Colony History

**9,000 B.C.E.**



Native Americans begin living in the Georgia area.



**1539**



Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto enters Georgia.



**1733**



Englishman James Oglethorpe founds the Georgia Colony.



**1751**



Slavery is legalized in Georgia.

**1788**

Georgia approves the U.S. Constitution.

We the People

Article I



# Georgia Before the Europeans

Thousands of years before Europeans arrived and began to colonize Georgia, Native Americans had moved into the area. By the time Spanish explorers arrived in the mid-1500s, several local native groups had joined into a **confederacy** called the Muskogee, or Creek. They settled in small *italwa*, or villages, and lived in houses of wood and mud. They grew crops such as rice and maize (corn). Each village had an open area for meetings, games, and ceremonies called a *pascova*.





**The Creek chose strong, smart men to serve as micos.**

older women, limited the mico's authority. Though the Creek fought wars, sometimes they settled their disagreements with foes in a game of *toli*, a lacrosse-like sport.

The people in a Creek village chose a *mico*, or chief. His job was to deal with outsiders in matters such as trade and warfare. The mico did not force villagers to follow his decisions. Instead, he persuaded them. Even then, leaders of family clans, usually



# The Cherokee

One of the Creek's most powerful neighbors was the Tsalagi, or Cherokee. The Cherokee pushed into the Creek homeland after being forced out of areas farther north. Cherokee farmers grew maize, beans, and squash. These are called the Three Sisters. In Cherokee culture, women farmed the fields and gathered berries and wild plants. Men hunted deer and other game, and when necessary, went to war.

The name Cherokee comes from the Creek language and means "people of different speech."

**Georgia's fertile soil provided the Cherokee with bountiful crops of maize.**







**Cherokee villages, surrounded by tall fences, were easily defended against enemies.**

The Cherokee built a large council house in the center of their villages for meetings and religious ceremonies. Thirty to 60 dome-shaped houses were erected around the council house. They were built of clay and sticks plastered onto a wooden frame.

The Cherokee eventually pushed the Creek farther south. Before that, another people appeared on the scene. Their arrival would be disastrous for the Creek and Cherokee.



## The Europeans Arrive

In the years after Christopher Columbus came to the Americas in 1492, Europeans slowly explored North America. They generally had little interest in the land that is now Georgia. Instead, they kidnapped Indians in the area, such as the Yamasee, to work as slaves in Spanish **colonies** in the Caribbean. In 1539, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto arrived in the region with 600 soldiers in search of silver and gold.

Before coming to North America, de Soto helped conquer the Inca people in South America.

**Hernando de Soto first landed on the coast of present-day Florida.**





De Soto traveled through the present-day southern and southeastern regions of the United States. At times, he had peaceful relations with native peoples. Often, however, his army robbed, enslaved, and killed Native Americans. But the Spaniards' most destructive action was accidental. De Soto's army had carried European diseases that the Indians could not fight off. In some places, 90 percent of the Indian population may have died from these diseases.

**Many Indians died of smallpox, which covers the body in a painful rash.**



Diseases such as measles and whooping cough proved fatal to the Indians.





**The British and the Indians  
had useful items to trade  
with one another.**

## The British Arrive

In 1674, English traders entered the area eager to trade with the Creek and Cherokee. The British exchanged cloth and metal goods with Indians for deerskins. They also traded for slaves that the Indians had taken from enemy peoples. At the time, the English were settled in South Carolina, and the Spanish were in Florida. Each began to see the Georgia region as a place of future settlement.





# Troubled Colony

In January 1733, an Englishman named James Oglethorpe led 114 British settlers up the Savannah River. He established a colony and named it Georgia, after Great Britain's King George II. Oglethorpe hoped to create a place for Britain's poor to get a fresh start. He belonged to a council of **trustees** that made the colony's rules. But all the other council members lived in Britain, so Oglethorpe served as Georgia's day-to-day leader.

← The colony's motto was "Not for ourselves, but for others."



The Georgian trustees gave each male colonist 50 acres (20 hectares) of land at the end of the first year of settlement. Five acres (2 ha) were located in Savannah, the colony's main town. Forty-five acres (18 ha) were in the country, where crops and farm animals could be raised. Oglethorpe worked to build good relationships with Native Americans. Chief Tomochichi's Yamacraw Creek people even taught the settlers how to grow native crops.

Tomochichi and his son Toonahowi were both close lifetime allies of Oglethorpe.



**Georgian colonists had a friendly relationship with the native peoples.**







Many new settlers arrived in the early years of the colony.

Parliament, Britain's **legislature**, sent money every year to help the colony. No other British colony received such a payment. But even with the funds, and despite Oglethorpe's good intentions, Georgia suffered serious problems. Crops failed because many settlers either did not know how to farm or refused to work the fields. Disease was a constant threat, and fresh water was hard to find. Spain threatened to invade the region to set up its own colonies.



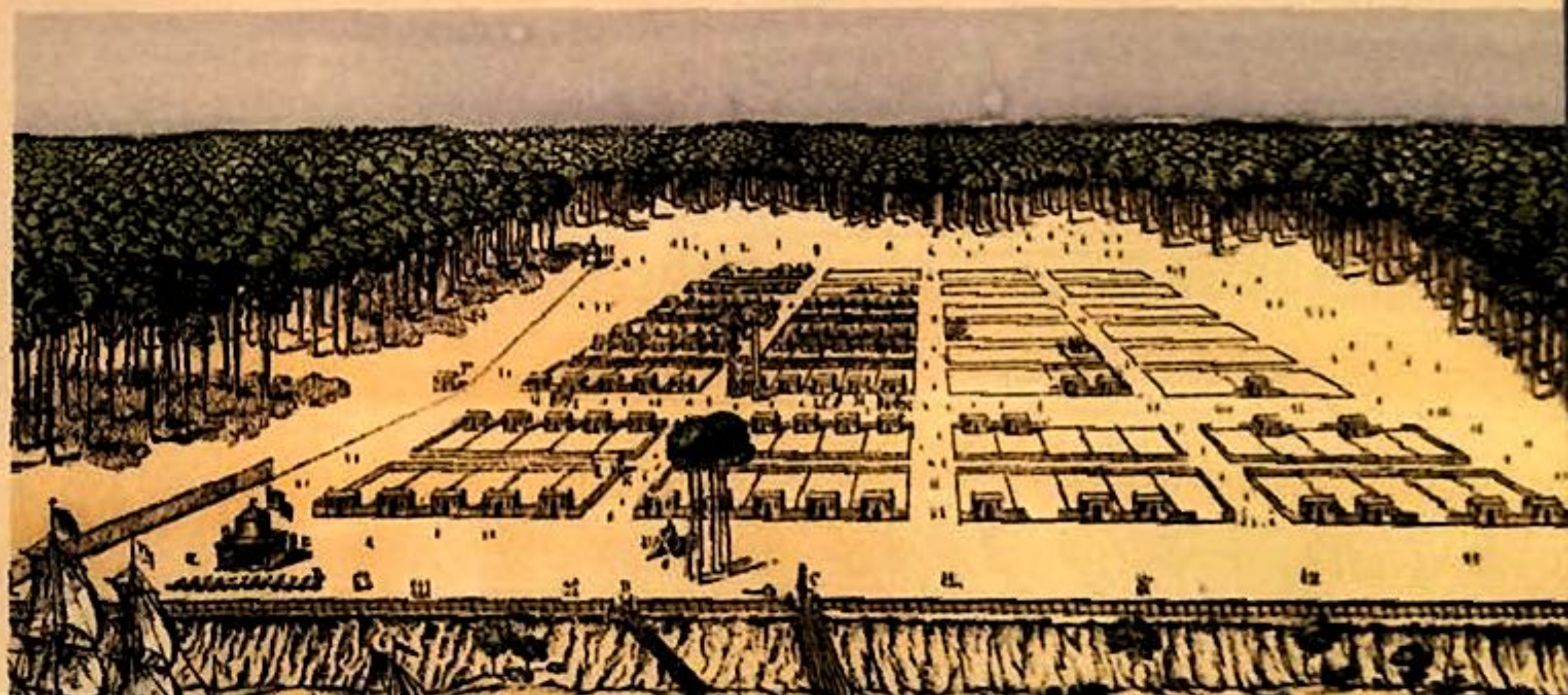
# Unhappiness

Georgia did not have a local government to solve problems, set up schools, or build roads. Trustees were making decisions far away in England. The lack of leadership created tension. Many settlers disliked the trustees' rules, especially the ban on liquor and slaves. In the 1730s, people began to leave the colony. The trustees, fearing the colony would fail, replaced Oglethorpe in 1743.

Today, Savannah is home to more than 130,000 people.



**Savannah  
was the first  
planned city**







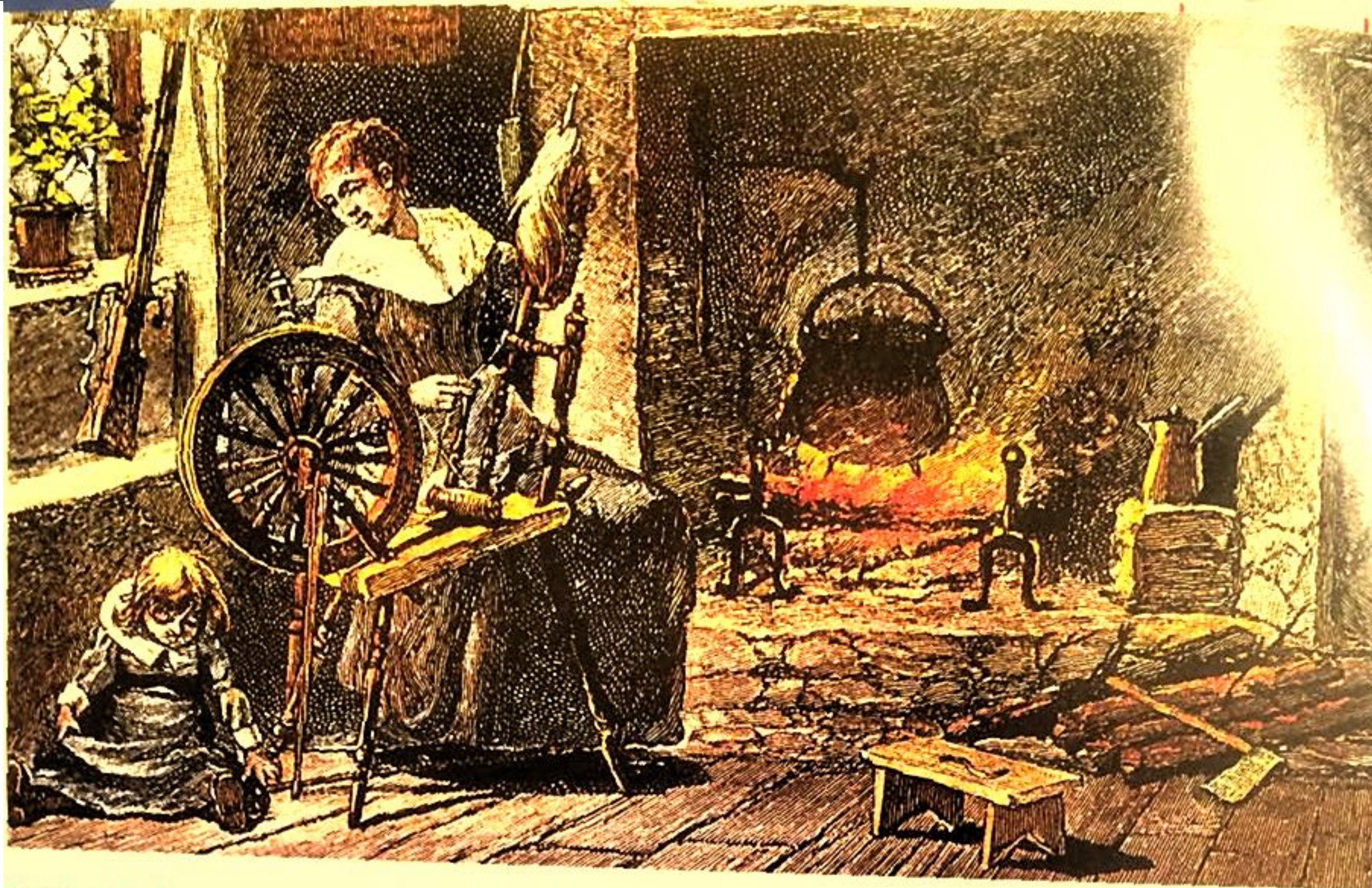
# Life in Colonial Georgia

There were, however, signs of hope in Georgia. Augusta had grown into a successful trading town. Savannah had a courthouse and a jail, and there was a public flower garden that settlers could enjoy. Trading ships stopped regularly in Savannah after local **merchants** set up for business in 1744. Georgians sold products such as dried meat and lumber to other colonies and to Britain. In return, merchants brought in coffee, sugar, clothing, and furniture.



Savannah remains a major port city today.





**Colonial women used spinning wheels to make yarn.**

## Women in the Colony

Women in the colony cared for the children, cleaned the home, cooked, and made clothes. On farms, they plowed, planted, and picked crops. Only a few women, such as Mary Musgrove, became traders or operated a business. Women could not own land. If a landowner without sons died, the land went back to the trustees. The colonists eventually pressured the trustees into changing this rule.



## Farmers, Traders, Frontiersmen

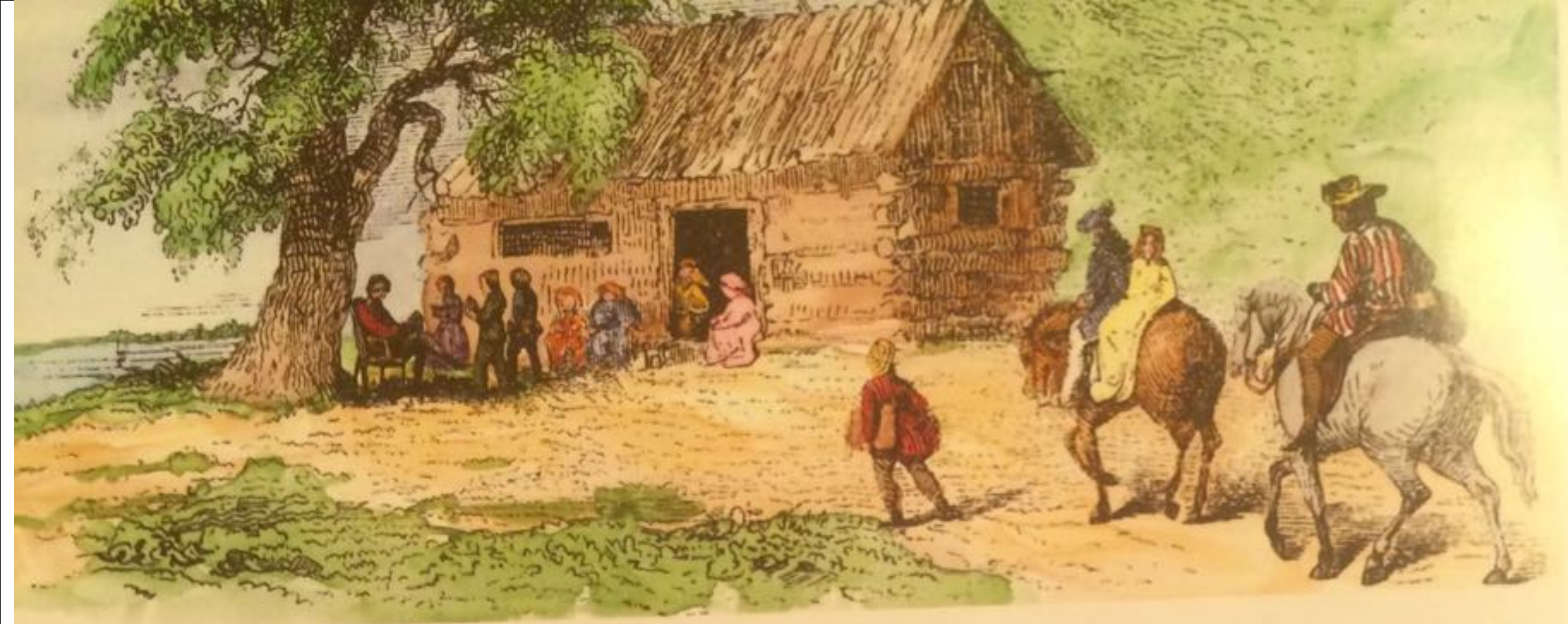
In the colony's early days, most men tried to farm. A few traded with the Indians. As Savannah grew, it attracted men who worked at specialized trades such as barrel making, shoemaking, and tailoring. These tradesmen taught their skills to boys, who started their own businesses after years of training. A small number of settlers moved to the undeveloped rural areas beyond Augusta to carve out farms on the **frontier**.

Most metal items were made from iron during colonial times.

**Blacksmiths created metal products such as horseshoes and tools.**







**Children from nearby farms traveled to local schools.**

## A Georgian Childhood

Boys chopped firewood and helped their fathers on the farm. Girls learned cooking, cleaning, and sewing from their mothers. Because Georgia's trustees did not provide schools, settlers at first taught their children at home. In time, schools known as old-field schools were established. These one-room buildings were erected in unused fields. Teachers presented simple lessons to the students, because most schools had few books and no paper, pencils, or other supplies.



# Slavery

Because of pressure from settlers, Georgia's trustees lifted the ban on slaves in 1751. By 1775, about 18,000 slaves were living in Georgia. Colonial law considered slaves property. Owners could sell slaves and take them away from their families. Slaves were often treated very harshly. They ate poorly, had little to wear, and lived in simple shacks or cabins. Children of slaves were also considered slaves.

Some slaves worked in the field while others worked in colonists' houses.

**After the settlement of Savannah, slaves were used to clear land and tend cattle.**

